

## Program Evaluation Project List 2001-08

### Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont

The Center for Rural Studies (CRS) at the University of Vermont has provided successful program evaluation services for social service programs for the past twenty years. Most recently, over the past nine years, CRS has provided *process* and *outcome* evaluation services for agencies in the areas of microenterprise development, farm-to-school and local food purchasing initiatives, education and literacy, teen leadership, restorative justice for youth, and domestic violence services. Many of these projects were designed to foster self-sufficiency in low income populations. Through this experience, CRS has extensive expertise in developing an evaluation plan and appropriate tools and conducting surveys, focus groups, interviews, and providing database development services. CRS also has extensive experience in conducting statistical and qualitative data analysis, writing reports, presenting findings at conferences, and publishing results on our website, in popular media, and peer reviewed journals. The following are descriptions of the past and present Program Evaluation projects conducted at CRS from 2001 to 2008. For more information about program evaluation at CRS, please visit our website at <http://crs.uvm.edu/evaluation>.

### Food, Community and Farm to School Initiatives

- **LACE: Local Agricultural Community Exchange. Evaluating the Impact of a Community Revitalization Project**



*Caption: Jackson Browne, a musician who has held several benefit concerts for LACE, Ariel Zevon, LACE director, and Sen Patrick Leahy at LACE's grand opening in June 2007.*

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The LACE project is a private sector community revitalization project, central to the rejuvenation of downtown Barre City, Vermont. LACE opened its doors in June 2007 with a Farm Fresh Market, Café, and an artisan vendor space to provide a direct connection between the community and farmers and artists. Serving the needs of the area's micro and small businesses, LACE features local

produce and products. With the assistance of partner agency Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVCAC), LACE's facility is being renovated to include a commercial, shared-use kitchen to enable home-based producers to expand their production and increase sales. Training and counseling through CVCAC's micro business development program will be available to vendors in sales techniques, marketing, pricing, production, business operations, and business plan development as needed, and classes will be available in ServSafe certification to those using the kitchen facility. Additionally, farmers and other producers serving the market and cafe will be able to access resource partners who can consult on production and planning at their farms and on site to improve their operations. All of these strategies will result in increased employment through business expansions as well as new business start-ups. The evaluation of this project focuses on process and outcomes measures, to determine best practices, the impact of services, and the development of a replicable model. Evaluation methods include surveys and focus groups with stakeholders. Three year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky. This project is also falls under the topic area of Micro Business Development and Access to Capital.

- **The Burlington School Foods Project**

U.S. Department of Agriculture. The **Burlington School Foods Project** is a citywide collaborative formed to address the integration of local foods into school meals and food insecurity among Burlington Youth. Evaluation focuses on process and outcomes measures, to determine impact of activities and the development of a replicable model. Evaluation methods include surveys and focus groups. Three year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky.

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- **The Vermont Kitchens Project**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Offices of Community Services. The Vermont Kitchens Project is a JOLI (Job Opportunities for Low-income Individuals) funded project, that provides training and production, technical, and marketing assistance to low income Vermonters in the Central Vermont region, interested in starting or expanding a small food service business. Both process and outcomes are addressed in the evaluation, including project impact on participants' business and social, human, and financial capital development, and lessons learned and feedback for improvement. Evaluation methods include surveys, participant and staff focus groups, and data analysis. Three year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky. This project is also falls under the topic area of Micro Business Development and Access to Capital.

- **The Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship**

U.S. Department of Agriculture/CSREES/Fund for Rural America. The Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (NECFE) is a collaborative effort of the New York State Food Venture Center at Cornell University and The Center for Food Science at the University of Vermont. The mission of the project is to provide comprehensive assistance to beginning and established food entrepreneurs thus promoting sustainable economic development of rural communities. Evaluation focuses on process and outcome measures with emphasis on impact of NECFE and how this Center can be a transferable model. Data collection methods include surveys, focus groups with staff and clients, review of organizational documents, and case studies of client experience and success. Four year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky. This project is also falls under the topic area of Micro Business Development and Access to Capital.

### **Micro Business Development and Access to Capital**

- **PS: Post Start-up Training and Technical Assistance**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The **Post Start-up Training and Technical Assistance** project is statewide, carried out by the regional partnerships of Vermont's Community Action Agencies and their Micro Business Development Programs. This project provides technical assistance and business support to established micro businesses. The evaluation of this project focuses on process and outcomes measures, to determine best practices, the impact of services, and the development of a replicable model. Evaluation methods include surveys and focus groups. Three year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky.

- **Community Capital of Vermont**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The **Community Capital of Vermont Loan Fund** project is statewide and regional partnership of Vermont's Community Action Agencies and their Micro Business Development Programs. CCVLF is a Community Development Financial Institution that will provide loans to micro and small businesses to the state of Vermont. The evaluation of this project focuses on process and outcomes measures, to determine best practices, the impact of activities, and the development of a replicable model. Evaluation methods include surveys and focus groups. Three year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky.

- **The Lead Abatement Initiative**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Offices of Community Services. The **Lead Abatement Initiative** is a JOLI (Job Opportunities for Low-income Individuals) funded project, that provides training and technical assistance to low income Vermonters in the Central Vermont region. Both process and outcomes are addressed, including project impact on participants' business and social, human, and financial capital development, and lessons learned and feedback for improvement. Evaluation methods include surveys, participant and staff focus groups, and data analysis. Three year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky.

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- **The Child Care Business Initiative**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Offices of Community Services. The Child Care Business Initiative (CCBI) is a JOLI funded statewide initiative of the Vermont Community Action Agencies' Micro Business Development Program. This project goals are to enable TANF and low-income individuals to start and operate successful child care programs and enable child care centers to improve their business operations and provide higher wages and better benefits. Evaluation focuses on process and outcomes measures, to determine impact of training on business success and social, human, and financial capital development. Evaluation methods include surveys (intake and follow up) and participant and staff focus groups. Three year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky.

- **Statewide Micro Business Development Program Client Follow Up Study**

Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity. Agency of Human Services. The Micro Business Development Project (MBDP) Pilot Follow Up Study is a statewide telephone survey to follow up with clients that used MBDP services in 2001 and 2002. The survey instrument focused on services used, impact on business, social, human, and financial capital development, job creation, satisfaction, and feedback for improvement. This pilot study is designed to test the survey instrument and methodology to possibly implement it on a larger scale on a continuous basis for MBDPs throughout Vermont. Five month study. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky.

### **Domestic Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiatives**

- **Children and Domestic Violence in Chittenden County**

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. The Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Grant of **Chittenden County Domestic Violence Task Force** focuses on services for children who experience domestic violence in Chittenden County, specifically rural areas. The evaluation of the 2006-2008 Rural Grant will focus on batterer accountability through the criminal justice system in Chittenden County. Two year evaluation. Third year of funding. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Fred Schmidt.

- **Domestic Abuse Education Project**

U.S. Department of Justice. Spectrum: Youth and Family Services, Burlington, Vermont. The Domestic Abuse Education Project (DAEP) is designed to provide participating men with information and skills needed to change abusive and violent behavior and beliefs. The overarching goal of the "Kidsafe" component of this project is to reduce abuse and improve the lives of children and partners by educating men who batter in Northern Vermont (Chittenden County). Evaluation focuses on examining attitudinal changes in participants through the use of a pre and post test and conducting focus groups with partners of participants to determine impact of the program on the lives of family members. Four year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt, Fred Schmidt, and Jane Kolodinsky.

- **Strengthening Community Collaboration in Domestic Violence**

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. The Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Grant of Chittenden County Domestic Violence Task Force focuses on the impact of domestic violence services in Chittenden County, specifically rural areas. Evaluation focuses on community collaboration and evaluating the structure, membership, and function of the DVTF as a community collaborative. Data is collected through both an online and mail surveys. Eighteen month evaluation. Second year of funding. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Fred Schmidt.

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- **Restorative Justice for Youth Project Evaluation**

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Spectrum: Youth and Family Services, Burlington, Vermont. The mission of the Restorative Justice for Youth Program is to reduce delinquency by providing timely and meaningful pre-charge interventions to youth who commit petty crimes in Northern Vermont (Chittenden County). The evaluation focuses on the project's outcomes and success in meeting grant goals, including accountability and change in attitude and desire to provide restitution towards their actions. Evaluation methods include data analysis, pre and post test, and satisfaction questionnaires. Three year evaluation. Michele Schmidt, Laura Durham, Frederick Schmidt.

### **Education and Literacy**

- **Vermont Millennium Arts Partnership**

U.S. Department of Commerce's Technology Opportunities Program. The Vermont Millennium Arts Partnership is an internet-based arts education program in Vermont public schools that, through the use of the latest technologies, is working to facilitate student learning through an online exchange among students, teachers, artists, musicians, and other professionals. Evaluation documents project process and outcomes of classroom participation in the online forum and related classroom activities. Evaluation methods include online surveys, workshop evaluation, and focus groups and interviews with project administrators and project participants. Funding is provided through a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Technology Opportunities Program, with other funding coming from the Jesse B. Cox Charitable Trust, Josephine Bay and C. Michael Paul Foundation, the State of Vermont, IBM, and Verizon. Three year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Frederick Schmidt.

- **Teens Teaching Internet Skills to Senior Citizens**

Health Care Finance Administration and CSREES. The Teens Teaching Internet Skills (TTIS) Project is a national initiative involving youth and adults from the 4-H Technology Teams in six states, including: Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington. This is a pilot project for a future, larger, national effort to engage youth in training individuals to navigate and obtain the needed information from the Medicare web site. This evaluation focuses on best practice of the process of the project and learning outcomes of workshop participants, specifically whether or not the learner acquired computer and Internet skills to navigate and benefit from information on the Medicare website. Evaluation methods include focus groups, surveys and interviews. Two year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt and Jane Kolodinsky.

- **South Windsor County Even Start Family Literacy Program**

Vermont Department of Education. The South Windsor County Even Start family literacy program works with low-income families in Southern Vermont to better prepare low-income children and their parents for success in school, community service, and life. Evaluation examines inputs and outputs of program activities, including adult and early childhood education outcomes, parenting education, and parent-child interaction. Evaluation methods include surveys, focus groups, and data analysis. Eight year evaluation. Michele Cranwell Schmidt, Laura Durham, Mahua Dasgupta, and Fred Schmidt.